

September's monthly ovitrap index for Aedes albopictus continues to fall

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) today (October 18) announced that the monthly ovitrap index for *Aedes albopictus* for September dropped to 6 per cent from 7.3 per cent in August. Though there was a decrease in the ovitrap index, the mosquito infestation was still slightly more extensive in the areas surveyed. The FEHD reminded the public to keep up effective prevention and control measures against mosquitoes, as well as to take personal protective measures to reduce the risk of contracting mosquito-borne diseases through mosquito bites.

"*Aedes albopictus* is a kind of mosquito that can transmit dengue fever (DF) and Zika virus. Hong Kong has recorded 29 local DF cases so far this year. Though there have been no new cases in the past few weeks, as the relatively high temperature of autumn in Hong Kong is favourable for mosquito breeding and DF is also highly prevalent in neighbouring areas, the public must stay alert and work with the Government to continue to carry out effective mosquito prevention and control measures," an FEHD spokesman said.

Among the 57 areas surveyed last month, positive ovitrap indices, ranging from 1.7 per cent to 19 per cent, were recorded in 45 areas, with the highest in Sheung Shui. As for the port areas, the monthly ovitrap index for *Aedes albopictus* for September also dropped to 1.4 per cent from 2.2 per cent in August.

The spokesman said, "The FEHD is very concerned about mosquito problems. In response to the local DF cases, the FEHD has enhanced the all-out anti-mosquito operations throughout the territory during the third phase of the territory-wide anti-mosquito campaign, including conducting weekly fogging operations to kill adult mosquitoes with a view to reducing the number of adult mosquitoes, carrying out inspection and trimming of grass as well as removing stagnant water, applying insecticide and disposing of abandoned water containers every week to remove the potential habitat of mosquitoes and prevent mosquito breeding. During the period, relevant departments and organisations have also carried out the above-mentioned operations in areas under their purview. In the aftermath of Super Typhoon Mangkhut, the FEHD spared no efforts in removing typhoon debris and fallen twigs and leaves, and at the same time stepped up clearance of stagnant water and rubbish to eliminate mosquito breeding grounds. The further decrease in September's monthly index showed that the relevant operations were effective in controlling and preventing mosquitoes.

"The FEHD and relevant government departments will continue to intensify their mosquito prevention and control work covering areas under their purview, and strengthen publicity and education campaigns. The district offices of the FEHD will continue to target areas which have drawn particular concern, such as public markets, cooked food centres and hawker bazaars,

single-block buildings, streets and back lanes, common parts of buildings, village houses, construction sites, vacant sites and road works sites to intensify mosquito prevention and control work. The FEHD will, immediately after each phase of the campaign, conduct special territory-wide thematic mosquito prevention and control operations so as to enhance the effectiveness of the campaign."

In addition, the FEHD set up four Pest Control Inspection Teams in May last year to step up inspection of construction sites and enforcement action against mosquito breeding. This year (as at October 7), the FEHD had instituted 170 prosecutions for mosquito breeding found in relevant premises under the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap 132), comprising 161 cases involving construction sites and nine cases involving other premises.

In order to keep the public abreast of the latest situation of mosquito infestation and assist them to take timely mosquito prevention and control measures, the FEHD is releasing additional results of the Area Ovitrap Index (AOI) for *Aedes albopictus* at two more stages every month, apart from the announcement of the monthly AOI and the monthly ovitrap index for *Aedes albopictus*. The FEHD will follow the established practice of notifying relevant government departments of the aforementioned indices so that they can carry out targeted mosquito prevention and control work promptly to strengthen the anti-mosquito efforts. As the survey for the ovitrap index in September was affected by the typhoon, only one set of additional AOI results was available in the month.

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The spokesman added that as *Aedes albopictus* breeds in small water bodies, members of the public should continue to carry out effective mosquito prevention and control measures, including inspecting their homes and surroundings to remove potential breeding grounds, scrubbing vases and pot plant saucers at least once a week, properly disposing of containers such as soft drink cans and lunch boxes, and drilling large holes in unused tyres. He also advised the public and estate management bodies to keep drains free of blockage and fill up all depressions to prevent puddles from forming. They should also scrub all drains and surface sewers with an alkaline detergent compound at least once a week to remove any mosquito eggs.

In addition, rural areas and the vicinity of shrubby areas are the natural habitats for mosquitoes, other insects and animals. Members of the public living in rural areas may install mosquito screens on windows and doors if necessary. Those staying in the natural environment should follow appropriate personal protective measures against mosquitoes, such as avoiding staying in the vicinity of shrubby areas for a long time, wearing light-coloured long-sleeved clothes and trousers and applying DEET-containing insect repellent. Members of the public are reminded to make reports to the government departments via 1823 if mosquito problems are detected.

The spokesman reiterated that effective mosquito control requires the sustained effort of all parties concerned. The community must work together with the Government to carry out effective mosquito control measures.

The ovitrap index is divided into four levels, reflecting the infestation level of *Aedes albopictus*. Level 1 (< 5 per cent) indicates that infestation of the mosquito is not extensive in the area surveyed. Level 2 (5 per cent – < 20 per cent) indicates that infestation of the mosquito is slightly more extensive in the area surveyed. Level 3 (20 per cent – < 40 per cent) indicates that infestation of the mosquito exceeds one-fifth of the area surveyed. Level 4 (>/= 40 per cent) indicates that almost half of the surveyed area is infested with the mosquito. The Government will step up the scale of anti-mosquito operations according to the level of infestation as well as reports from front-line staff and the public.

As *Aedes albopictus* can transmit DF and Zika virus, oviposition traps are set in 57 areas in Hong Kong for monitoring the breeding of *Aedes albopictus*, which is only one of the mosquito species commonly found in Hong Kong and is active only in the daytime. The index does not capture the activity of *Aedes albopictus* outside the 57 areas and it also does not measure the prevalence of other kinds of mosquitoes.

The ovitrap indices for *Aedes albopictus* in different areas and information on mosquito prevention and control measures are available on the department website at www.fehd.gov.hk.

[Third Report of HKSAR for UN Human Rights Council under Universal Periodic Review available online](#)

The third report of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) submitted to the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) under the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) mechanism is available online today (October 18). The public can also obtain the report from the Home Affairs Enquiry Centres of the District Offices starting from tomorrow afternoon.

The UNHRC has been conducting its third UPR on the human rights situations of member states of the United Nations since 2017. The third UPR on the People's Republic of China is scheduled to take place in early November 2018. The report of the HKSAR constitutes part of the report submitted by the People's Republic of China to the UNHRC earlier.

"The report describes the framework and measures for promotion and protection of human rights in the HKSAR. It also sets out the developments, achievements and challenges faced in various human rights issues," a Government spokesman said today.

"In preparing the report, the Government took into account the comments and views received from Legislative Councillors and members of the community during the public consultation on the proposed outline of the report in April and May this year."

The report will be made available to stakeholders, including Legislative Councillors; members of the Human Rights Forum, the Children's Rights Forum, the Ethnic Minorities Forum and the Committee on the Promotion of Racial Harmony; and relevant non-government organisations.

The full text of the report, in Chinese and English, is available on the website of the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau (www.cmab.gov.hk/en/press/reports_human.htm).

[Consensus statement issued on phasing down use of dental amalgam in Hong Kong](#)

The Department of Health (DH), joined by the Dental Council of Hong Kong, the Faculty of Dentistry of the University of Hong Kong, the College of Dental Surgeons of Hong Kong and the Hong Kong Dental Association, issued the "Consensus Statement on the Minamata Convention on Mercury and Phase Down of Dental Amalgam in Hong Kong" today (October 18). The statement was issued to support the requirement of the Minamata Convention on Mercury to phase down the use of dental amalgam for a better environment, and to reaffirm the safety of dental amalgam as a filling material in dental procedures.

The Convention is an international treaty that aims to protect human health and the environment from anthropogenic emissions and releases of mercury and mercury compounds. It was signed in 2013 by 128 signatory nations and entered into force in 2017. The Convention also applies to Hong Kong.

As required by the Convention, the use of dental amalgam shall be phased down gradually. Under the statement, five recommendations to phase down the use of dental amalgam in Hong Kong are made as follows:

1. Non-mercury containing filling materials should be considered as far as practicable. Amalgam may be considered for conditions which are suboptimal for non-mercury containing restorative materials, such as difficult moisture control;
2. Dental amalgam must only be used in pre-dosed encapsulated form;
3. Amalgam separators are strongly recommended to be installed to retrieve

the amalgam debris and residues;

4. Amalgam waste must be properly stored, handled and disposed of in accordance with the provisions of the Waste Disposal (Chemical Waste) (General) Regulation; and

5. Dental amalgam restorations should not be removed and replaced with alternative restorative materials without clear clinical indications. In the case of a patient's request based on non-specific or perceived health complaints, the patient should be fully informed of the implications of this decision.

A spokesman for the DH said, "Although dentistry contributes only a very small proportion of mercury to the environment, there are concerns over its potential impact on the environment. The statement represents the collaborative effort by the Government and the profession to take responsibility to improve the environment."

Dental amalgam has been widely used for more than 150 years because of its ease of use, durability, appropriate mechanical properties and cost-effectiveness. A number of evidence-based studies have also confirmed its safety in dentistry.

International authorities (including the World Health Organization and the World Dental Federation), governments, national dental associations and dental professional organisations have supported the safety and effectiveness of dental amalgam as a filling material. As dental amalgam may have better performance than other alternative filling materials in certain situations, they consider that it should remain available as a treatment option for the time being.

For the full statement, please visit the DH Dental Service's website (www.dh.gov.hk/english/main/main_ds/files/consensus_statement.pdf).

Employer fined for late payment of wages

Sweet Desires Asia Limited was prosecuted by the Labour Department (LD) for failing to pay six employees' wages, totalling about \$278,000, within seven days after the expiry of the wage period as required by the Employment Ordinance (EO). The employer was fined \$56,000 after pleading guilty at Kwun Tong Magistrates' Courts today (October 18).

"The ruling helps disseminate a strong message to all employers that they have to pay employees wages within the time limit stipulated in the EO,"

an LD spokesman said.

"The LD will not tolerate these offences and will continue to make dedicated efforts in enforcing the law and safeguarding employees' statutory rights," the spokesman added.

[Auction of personalised vehicle registration marks this Saturday](#)

The Transport Department (TD) today (October 18) reminded the public that the 128th auction of personalised vehicle registration marks (PVRMs) will be held this Saturday (October 20) at Meeting Room S421, L4, Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, Wan Chai.

A list of 218 approved PVRMs put up for auction can be downloaded from the department's website, www.td.gov.hk. The reserve price for all these marks is \$5,000. Applicants who have paid a deposit of \$5,000 are required to participate in the bidding (including the first bid at the reserve price). Otherwise, the PVRM concerned may be sold to another bidder at the reserve price.

Bidders are also reminded to bring the following documents with them for completion of registration and payment procedures immediately after the successful bidding:

- (i) The identity document of the successful bidder;
 - (ii) The identity document of the purchaser if it is different from the successful bidder;
 - (iii) A copy of the certificate of incorporation if the purchaser is a body corporate; and
 - (iv) A crossed cheque made payable to "The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region" or "The Government of the HKSAR". (For an auctioned mark paid for by cheque, the first three working days after the date of auction will be required for cheque clearance confirmation before processing of the application for mark assignment can be completed.)
- Successful bidders can also pay through the Easy Pay System (EPS). Payment by post-dated cheques, cash or other methods will not be accepted.

People who want to participate in the bidding at the auction should take note of the following important points:

- (i) The display of a PVRM on a motor vehicle should be in compliance with the requirements stipulated in Schedule 4 to the Road Traffic (Registration and Licensing of Vehicles) Regulations;
- (ii) Any change to the arrangement of letters, numerals and blank spaces of a

PVRM, i.e. single and two rows as auctioned, will not be allowed;

- (iii) Purchasers must make payment of the purchase price through EPS or by crossed cheque and complete the Memorandum of Sale of PVRM immediately after the bidding for the PVRM concerned. Subsequent alteration of the particulars in the memorandum will not be permitted; and
- (iv) The purchaser shall, within 12 months after the date of auction, apply to the Commissioner for Transport for the PVRM to be assigned to a motor vehicle registered in the name of the purchaser. If the purchaser fails to assign the PVRM within 12 months, allocation of the PVRM will be cancelled and arranged for re-allocation in accordance with the statutory provision without prior notice to the purchaser.

"Upon completion of the Memorandum of Sale of PVRM, the purchaser will be issued a receipt and a Certificate of Allocation of Personalised Registration Mark. The Certificate of Allocation will serve to prove the holdership of the PVRM. Potential buyers of vehicles bearing a PVRM should check the Certificate of Allocation with the sellers and pay attention to the details therein. For transfer of vehicle ownership, this certificate together with other required documents should be produced to the Transport Department for processing," the spokesman said.

For other auction details, please refer to the Guidance Notes – Auction of PVRM, which is available at the department's licensing offices or can be downloaded from its website, www.td.gov.hk.